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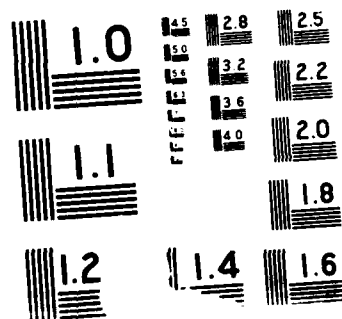
GASEOUS POLYMER SOLUTIONS- SOLUBILITIES OF  
POLYDIMETHYLSILOXANE AND POLYP (U) GEORGIA INST OF  
TECH ATLANTA SCHOOL OF TEXTILE ENGINEERING  
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Gaseous Polymer Solutions: Solubilities of Polydimethylsiloxane  
and Polypropylene in Carbon Dioxide and  
Viscosities of Polydimethylsiloxane in Carbon Dioxide

by

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Abstract

Polydimethylsiloxane is soluble in carbon dioxide in the weight fraction PDMS  $\sim$  0.026 to  $\sim$  0.33, pressure  $\sim$  80 to  $\sim$  450 atm, and 35° to 80°C temperature region. Polypropylene is soluble in carbon dioxide in the weight fraction PP  $\sim$  0.062 to  $\sim$  0.33, pressure  $\sim$  440 to  $\sim$  950 atm, and 165° to 190°C temperature region. Solutions of PDMS ( $M \sim 17.5 \cdot 10^3$ , viscosity 168 centipoises) at 0.26 weight fraction in  $CO_2$  have viscosities in the 3.8 to 7.4 centipoise range.

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Abstract

Polydimethylsiloxane is soluble in carbon dioxide in the weight fraction PDMS ~ 0.026 to ~ 0.33, pressure ~ 80 to ~ 450 atm, and 35° to 80°C temperature region. Polypropylene is soluble in carbon dioxide in the weight fraction PP ~ 0.062 to ~ 0.33, pressure ~ 440 to ~ 950 atm, and 165° to 190°C temperature region. Solutions of PDMS ( $M \sim 17.5 \cdot 10^3$ , viscosity 168 centipoises) at 0.26 weight fraction in CO<sub>2</sub> have viscosities in the 3.8 to 7.4 centipoise range.

Supercritical polymer solutions should be attractive possibilities as media for the fabrication and transport of polymers. Measurements of the appreciable solubilities of polydimethylsiloxane, PDMS, and polypropylene, PP, in carbon dioxide, CO<sub>2</sub>, and the relatively low viscosities of PDMS in CO<sub>2</sub> support this hypothesis.

## I. Solubility Measurements

### A. Experimental Methods

Solubilities were determined by observing visually the onset of critical opalescence while very slowly decreasing or increasing gas pressure in a pressure system (Fig 1.). A weighed charge of polymer was placed in pressure vessel c. with 6 to 12 steel balls (0.794 cm diameter). The system was outgassed at room temperature. Carbon dioxide at pressure ~100 atm was admitted to the system, and the system was heated to temperature of measurement. During the heating, the pressure increased; this was controlled easily by admitting CO<sub>2</sub> as necessary from the heated storage vessel s.v. (in which CO<sub>2</sub> had been condensed before start of the experiment) or by bleeding to the atmosphere. Gas pressures were adjusted so as to dissolve polymers at the temperatures of the experiments. The pressure vessel was rocked slowly about its axis through an angle of about 120°. Steel balls in the vessel provided some stirring. The 0.6328  $\mu$  laser beam passing through the cell and projected on a screen permitted easy observation of dissolution of polymer in gas and precipitation of polymer from gas. Pressures were observed by a diaphragm strain gage pressure transducer t. which was calibrated

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at elevated temperatures using free piston gages. Pressures were adjusted, usually by slowly bleeding the system, to observe the onsets and disappearances of critical miscibility, usually seen as complete absorption (or interruption) or undiminished transmission of the laser beam. Pressures between onset and ending of critical opalescence usually differed by less than one atmosphere; maximum differences were a few atmospheres.

Solubilities were observed repeatedly by raising and lowering gas pressures. Care was exercised in observing as carefully as possible to minimize the failure to observe any condensed phase in "blind spots" in the pressure cell. A volume reducing cylinder with inside diameter equal to the unobstructed diameters of the cell windows was used to eliminate "blind spots" in a few runs. A light scattering cell (1), which had no "blind spots" when viewed from a variety of angles, was used to check for failures to observe condensed phases.

The solvent gas, carbon dioxide,  $\text{CO}_2$ , 99.99+percent pure (Matheson) was used as received. Polydimethylsiloxanes (PDMS) used in solubility studies were:

<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Designation</u>	<u>Nominal Molecular</u> <u>Weight</u>
General Electric Co.	SF-96-350	$17.5 \cdot 10^3$
	CF1215	$10 \cdot 10^3$
	Viscasil 300,000	$300 \cdot 10^3$
	(AM009)	$1.0 \cdot 10^6$

Polypropylene solubility studies were made using Hercules, Inc., Profax 6301 polypropylene.

## B. Data Analyses

Concentrations of polymers in gas were estimated from weights of polymers charged to the pressure vessel and the weight of CO<sub>2</sub> in the pressure vessel calculated from the observed pressure, p, and temperature, T, and the net volume of the pressure cell using a real gas equation:

$$\text{Weight of gas} = M_{\text{gas}} \cdot \frac{P \cdot (V_{\text{cell}} - V_{\text{polymer}} - V_{\text{balls}})}{Z(p,T) \cdot R \cdot T}$$

$$\text{where } V_{\text{polymer}} = \frac{\text{weight of polymer}}{\text{crystal density}}$$

$Z(p,T)$  = compressibility factor of pure gas.

Using literature values of the compressibility factor of pure CO<sub>2</sub> (2) rather than the unknown compressibilities of the solutions probably overestimated the compressibility factors slightly resulting in overestimates of solubilities. Using crystal densities (3) to estimate the volumes occupied by polymer molecules in solution may have underestimated these volumes slightly leading to underestimates of solubilities.

## C. Results of Solubility Studies

PDMS and PP are quite soluble in dense CO<sub>2</sub>. Concentrations in excess of 33 percent by weight PDMS in CO<sub>2</sub> and 20 percent PP were measured in this study. In earlier work solubilities up to 37 percent PP in CO<sub>2</sub> were observed (4).

The pressure-concentration isotherms for PDMS-CO<sub>2</sub> and PP-CO<sub>2</sub> solutions are given in Figures 2 and 3. PDMS ( $M \sim 17.5 \cdot 10^3$ ) is quite readily soluble in CO<sub>2</sub> in the 90 to 140 atmosphere region at 35°C and ~300 atmospheres at 80°C. PDMS of molecular weight

about  $17.5 \cdot 10^3$  is a viscous oil at room temperature; it dissolves readily in dense  $\text{CO}_2$  if densities are sufficiently great. PP ( $\bar{M}_w \sim 40 \cdot 10^3$  to  $50 \cdot 10^3$ ) dissolves in  $\text{CO}_2$  at temperatures above its melting point. Because fiber grade PP melts between  $150^\circ$  and  $160^\circ\text{C}$ , solubility measurements were made from  $165^\circ$  to  $190^\circ\text{C}$ . In this temperature range, pressures of  $\text{CO}_2$  dissolving PP increase from  $\sim 440$  atm to  $\sim 950$  atm. At these higher temperatures, higher pressures are necessary to produce  $\text{CO}_2$  densities high enough to dissolve molten polymer. Pressure-temperature-concentration measurements of critical immiscibility are shown as isobars in Figures 4 and 5. The almost closed loops of temperature-concentration plots for PDMS in  $\text{CO}_2$  (Figure 4) suggest that the one phase, PDMS soluble in  $\text{CO}_2$  region may enclose a two phase volume in pressure-temperature-concentration space as shown in Figure 6. The solubility data for PP in  $\text{CO}_2$  measured to date indicate that the region of miscibility in pressure-temperature-concentration space lies above a surface shaped such that miscibility temperatures increase with concentration of PP at constant pressure and decrease with increasing pressure at constant concentration (Figure 5 and 7).

Temperature dependence of the solubilities of PDMS and PP in  $\text{CO}_2$  are quite different (Figures 4 and 7) in that temperature-concentration plots at constant pressure for PP in  $\text{CO}_2$  appear to be only the upper left hand portions of any almost closed loops like those for PDMS in  $\text{CO}_2$ . That the lower portions of solubility curves like those for PDMS in  $\text{CO}_2$  probability cannot



be observed for PP in CO<sub>2</sub> is not surprising because the PP is partially crystalline, m.p. ~160°C, precluding solubility at temperatures much below the melting temperature. The solubility of PP in CO<sub>2</sub> increases with increasing temperature at constant pressure (Figure 5). The solubility of PDMS in CO<sub>2</sub> decreases with increasing temperature at constant pressure at most concentrations (Figure 4). At lower concentrations of polymer and at higher temperatures, solubilities increase with increasing temperatures as they must if the p-T-concentration space encloses a two phase region (Figure 6).

Pressures necessary to dissolve PDMS in carbon dioxide increase with increasing molecular weight as shown in Figure 8 for concentrations approximately 15 weight percent. Pressure increases were about 30 percent from ~300 to ~390 atm as molecular weight increases from 17.5 · 10<sup>3</sup> to 40 · 10<sup>3</sup> and about 15 percent to ~440 atm as molecular weight increases from 40 · 10<sup>3</sup> to 1.0 · 10<sup>6</sup>.

#### D. Solution Thermodynamics

For any multicomponent system the Helmholtz and Gibbs partial molal free energies are related by the equations.

$$\Delta \bar{A}_1 = \left( \frac{\partial \Delta A}{\partial n_1} \right)_{v_1, T} = \Delta \bar{G}_1 = \left( \frac{\partial \Delta G}{\partial n_1} \right)_{p_1, T} = RT \ln \left( \frac{f_1}{f_1^\circ} \right) \quad (1)$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \bar{A}_1 &= \Delta \bar{E}_1 - T \Delta \bar{S}_1 && \text{(Helmholtz)} \\ \Delta \bar{G}_1 &= \Delta \bar{H}_1 - T \Delta \bar{S}_1 = \Delta \bar{E}_1 + p \Delta \bar{V}_1 - T \Delta \bar{S}_1 && \text{(Gibbs)} \\ f_1 &= \text{fugacity of gas at equilibrium pressure,} \\ f_1^\circ &= \text{fugacity of gas in standard state at} \\ &\quad \text{temperature } T \text{ (taken as } f_1^\circ = 1 \text{ atm)} \end{aligned}$$

and

$$RT \ln f = \frac{RT}{p} \ln p - \int_0^p \alpha(p, T) dp \quad (2)$$

$$\text{where} \quad V = \frac{RT}{p} - \alpha(p, T)$$

3

is the equation of state of the real gas. The temperature derivatives of the partial molal free energies may be used to calculate changes in partial molal energies and entropies of dilution:

$$\left( \frac{\partial \Delta \bar{A}_1}{\partial T} \right)_1 = - \Delta \bar{S}_1$$

4

$$\text{and,} \quad \left[ \frac{\partial (\Delta \bar{A}_1 / T)}{\partial T} \right]_v = - \frac{\Delta \bar{A}_1}{T^2} + \frac{1}{T} \left( \frac{\partial \Delta \bar{A}_1}{\partial T} \right)_1 = - \frac{\Delta \bar{E}_1}{T^2} = R \left( \frac{\partial \ln f_1}{\partial T} \right)_v$$

5

Because the pressure system has essentially constant volume, partial molal energies of dilution are calculated and reported rather than the usual partial molal enthalpies (heats) of dilution which can be calculated only for systems maintained at constant external pressure.

Partial molal energies,  $\Delta \bar{E}_1$ , and entropies,  $\Delta \bar{S}_1$ , of dilution are given in Table I. These are  $\Delta \bar{E}_1 \sim -0.6$  to  $-1.1$  kcal/mol and  $\Delta \bar{S}_1 \sim -13.5$  cal/mol  $^{\circ}\text{K}$  for  $\text{CO}_2$  in the PDMS- $\text{CO}_2$  system in which solubility decreases with increasing temperature at constant pressure. For  $\text{CO}_2$  in the PP- $\text{CO}_2$  solutions,  $\Delta \bar{E}_1 \sim 5.0$  to  $1.5$  kcal and  $\Delta \bar{S}_1 \sim -2.1$  to  $-8.5$  cal/mol- $^{\circ}\text{K}$  as weight fraction decreases from 0.20 to 0.06, PP.

The partial molal energies and entropies of dilution of  $\text{CO}_2$  in gaseous solutions of PDMS in  $\text{CO}_2$  are quite different. The interactions of the nonpolar but strongly quadripolar and quite polarizable  $\text{CO}_2$  molecules with the quite polarizable polydimethylsiloxane and the much less polarizable polypropylene

should be quite different. These differences in interactions should be manifest in differences in solution thermodynamics at comparable pressures and temperatures.

## II Viscosity Measurements

Viscosities of PDMS (MW  $\sim 17.5 \cdot 10^3$ )- CO<sub>2</sub> solutions were measured using a rolling ball viscosimeter, Ruska Instrument Corp., Model 1602. The viscosimeter was calibrated using silicone oils of known viscosities, i.e. Dow-Corning 200-5 silicone fluid.

The viscosities of solutions of 0.26 weight fraction PDMS in CO<sub>2</sub> are relatively low from 0.038 to 0.074 poise decreasing with increasing temperature and pressure. Results are given in Table II. The viscosity of the pure silicone oil (MW  $\sim 17.5 \cdot 10^3$ ) is about 1.64 poise; thus the 0.26 weight fraction PDMS solutions have viscosities only two to five percent as great as the pure silicone polymer. The solution viscosities are about 100 times the viscosities of pure carbon dioxide in the pressure-temperature region of the solutions.

## Conclusions

Polydimethylsiloxanes and polypropylene are easily dissolved and sufficiently soluble in carbon dioxide at easily accessible pressures ( $p < 450$  atm for PDMS and  $p < 900$  atm for PP) that these solutions can be useful as media in processing these

polymers. Further, the viscosities of polydimethylsiloxane ( $M = 17.5 \cdot 10^3$ ) at useful concentrations (weight fraction PDMS = 0.26) are low (3.8 to 7.4 centipoises) suggesting that gaseous solutions of polymers may be attractive alternatives to melts, liquid solutions, and suspensions in transporting and fabricating polymers.

Table I  
Partial Molal Energies and Entropies of Dilution of  
Carbon Dioxide in Gaseous Solutions of  
Polydimethylsiloxane and Polypropylene in Carbon Dioxide

Polymer	Concentration Weight Percent	Temperature °C	Partial Molal Energy of Dilution $\Delta \bar{E}_1$ kcal/mol	Partial Molal Entropy of Dilution $\Delta \bar{S}_1$ cal/mol
PDMS	2.6	80	-0.8 <sub>1</sub>	-13.6
Polydimethyl- siloxane	17.5	35 and 80	-1.1 <sub>4</sub>	-14.7
$\bar{M} = 17.5 \cdot 10^3$	33.2	35 and 80	-0.6 <sub>6</sub>	-13.2
PP	6.8	175	1.5 <sub>3</sub>	-8.9
polypropylene	10	186	1.7 <sub>9</sub>	-8.3
$\bar{M}_w = (40 \text{ to } 50) \cdot 10^3$	12	187	2.9 <sub>5</sub>	-6.0
	16	183	3.6 <sub>0</sub>	-4.9
	20.4	180	5.0	-2.1

Table II  
Viscosities of Gaseous Solutions of Polydimethylsiloxane in  
Carbon Dioxide and of Pure Components

		Viscosity-centipoises			$\frac{g}{cm \cdot sec} \cdot 10^{-1}$
Temperature--> Pressure		35°C	50°C	80°C	
PDMS - CO <sub>2</sub> (0.26 wt.fraction polydimethylsiloxane M = $17.5 \cdot 10^3$ )	82 atm	7.4			
	114	4.3			
	132		5.4		
	148		3.3		
	211			4.1	
PDMS polydimethylsiloxane (pure)		164			
CO <sub>2</sub> (pure)	82	0.040*			
	114	0.061*			
	132		0.050*		
	148		0.057*		
	211			0.050*	

\* Viscosity data for CO<sub>2</sub> are estimated by interpolation of published data cited in reference 5.

## References

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### Captions for Figures

- Figure 1 - Polymer in Gas Solubility Apparatus. (Components: t.: pressure transducer, r.d.: rupture disc, c.: pressure cell, s.v.: storage vessel for gas at high pressure.)
- Figure 2 - Solubility Isotherms for Polydimethylsiloxane in Carbon Dioxide, Plots of CO<sub>2</sub> Pressures versus Weight Fractions Polydimethylsiloxane at Constant Temperatures.
- Figure 3 - Solubility Isotherms for Polypropylene in Carbon Dioxide, Plots of CO<sub>2</sub> Pressures versus Weight Fractions Polypropylene at Constant Temperatures.
- Figure 4 - Solubility Isobars for Polydimethylsiloxane in Carbon Dioxide, Plots of Temperatures versus Weight Fractions Polydimethylsiloxane at Constant Pressures (CO<sub>2</sub>).
- Figure 5 - Solubility Isobars for Polypropylene in Carbon Dioxide, Plots of Temperatures versus Weight Fractions Polypropylene at Constant Pressures (CO<sub>2</sub>).
- Figure 6 - Plot of Pressure - Temperature - Concentration (X) Behavior of Solubility of Polydimethylsiloxane in Carbon Dioxide.
- Figure 7 - Plot of Pressure - Temperature - Concentration (X) Behavior of Solubility of Polypropylene in Carbon Dioxide.
- Figure 8 - Effects of Molecular Weight on Solubility of Polydimethylsiloxane in Carbon Dioxide, Plot of CO<sub>2</sub> Pressures versus Temperatures for Solutions of Polydimethylsiloxane of Various Molecular Weights at 0.18 Weight Fraction PDMS.



CO<sub>2</sub> PRESSURE - ATM

POLYPROPYLENE CONCENTRATION - WEIGHT FRACTION

TEMPERATURE - °C

POLYPROPYLENE CONCENTRATION - WEIGHT FRACTION

CO<sub>2</sub> PRESSURE - ATM

WT  
FRACT  
PP

TEMPERATURE - °C

CO<sub>2</sub> PRESSURE - ATM

TEMPERATURE - °C

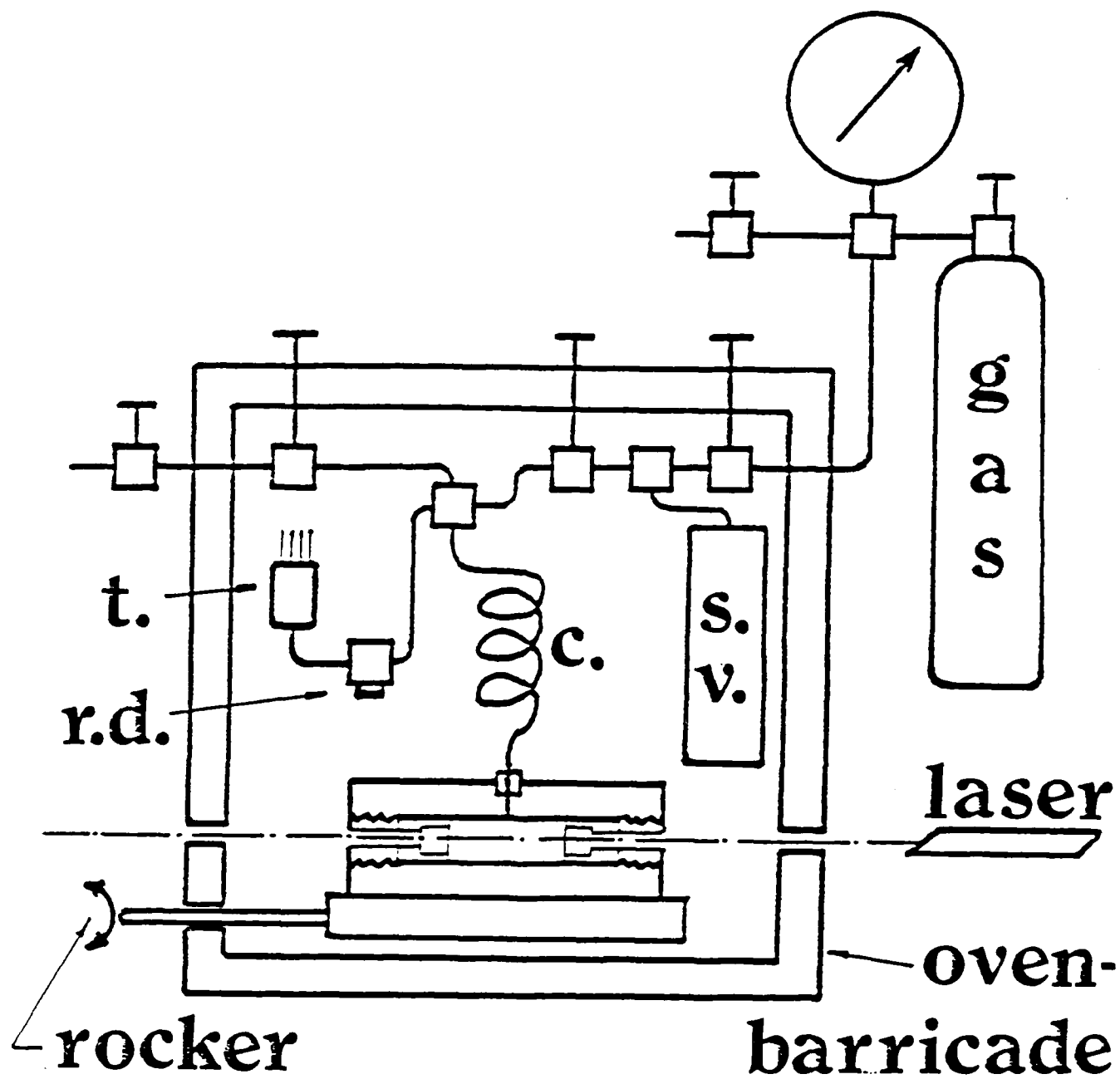


Figure 1 - Polymer in Gas Solubility Apparatus. (Components: t.: pressure transducer, r.d.: rupture disc, c.: pressure cell, s.v.: storage vessel for gas at high pressure.)

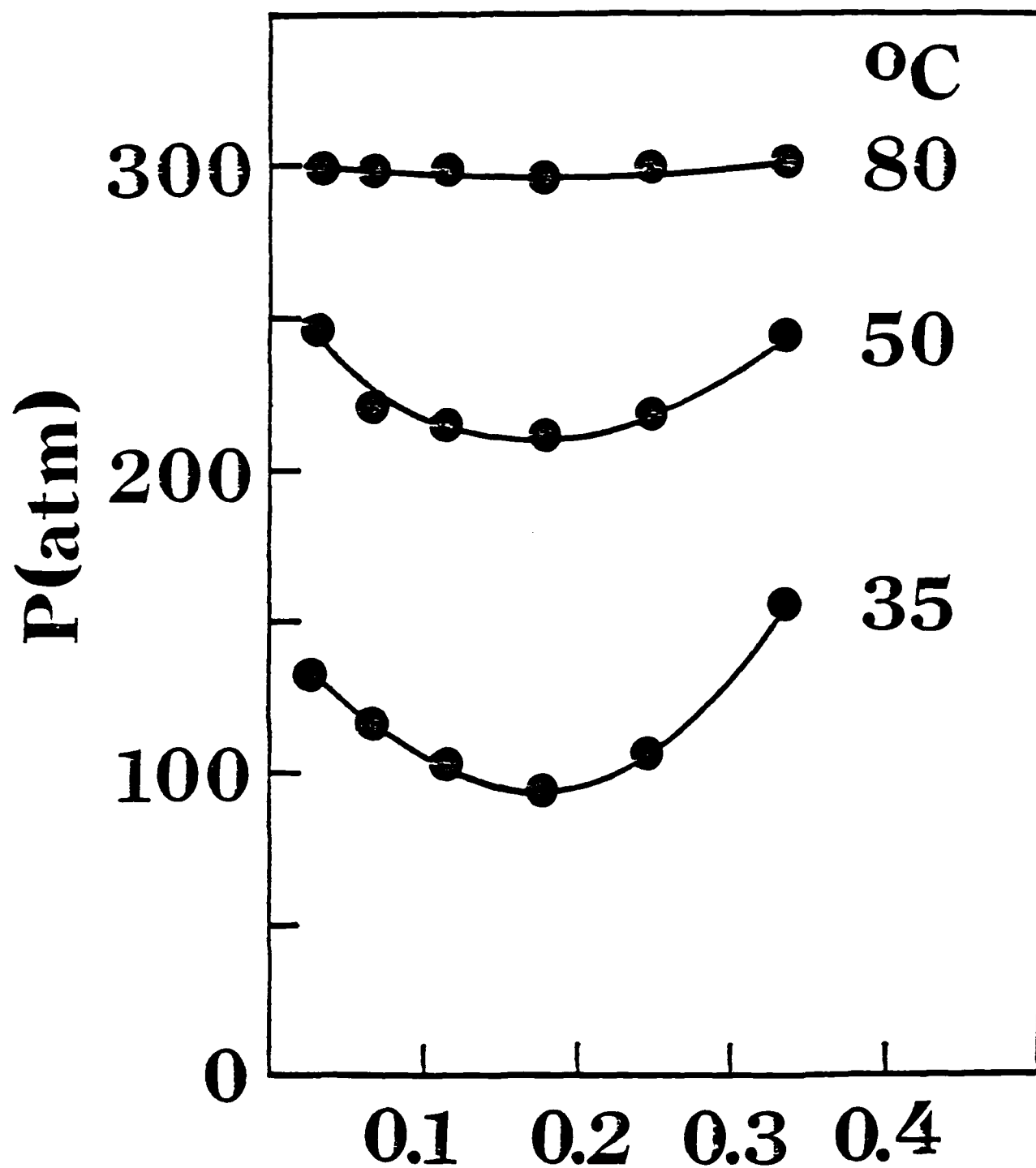


Figure 2 - Solubility Isotherms for Polydimethylsiloxane in Carbon Dioxide, Plots of CO<sub>2</sub> Pressures versus Weight Fractions Polydimethylsiloxane at Constant Temperatures.

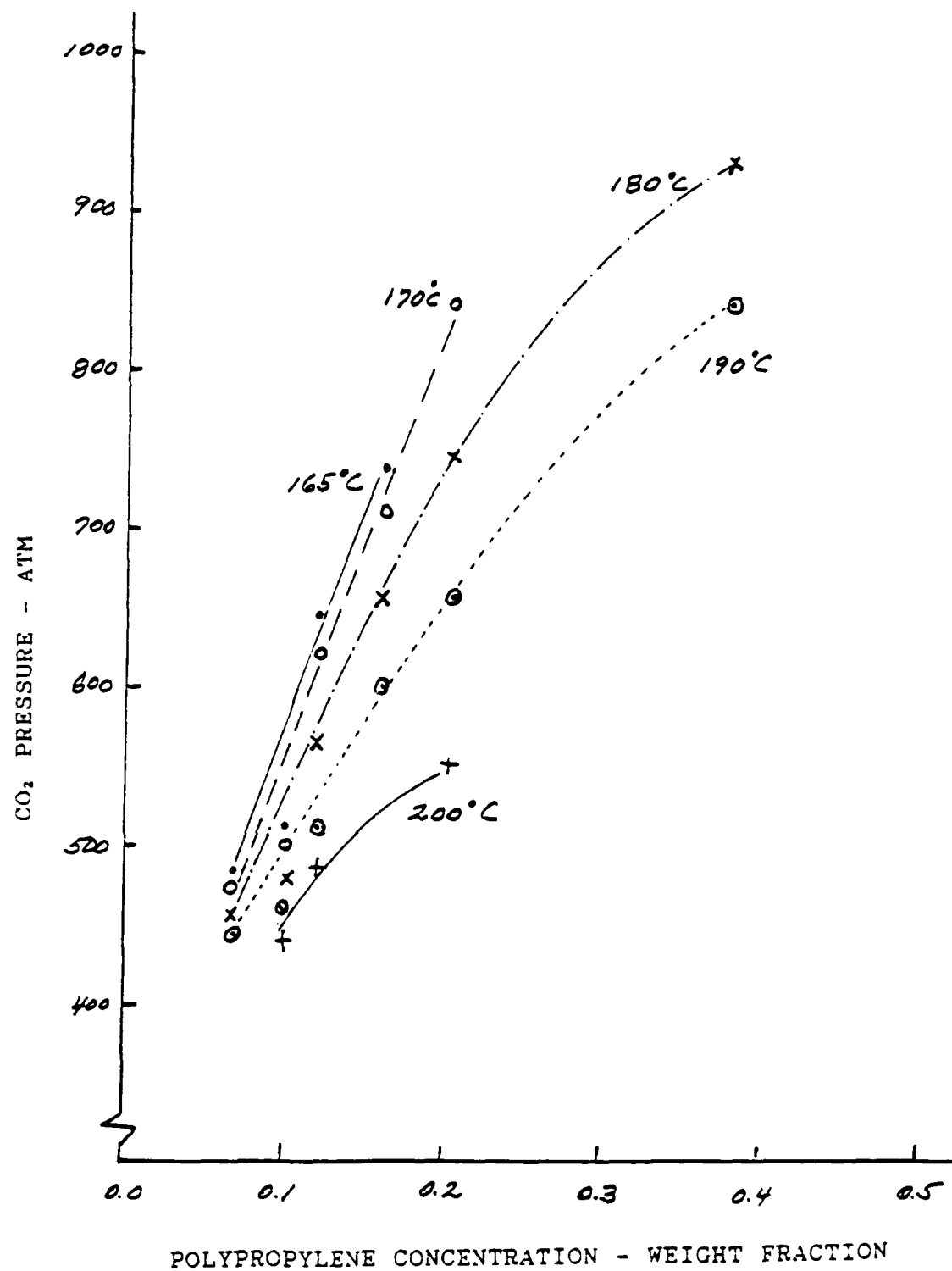


Figure 3 - Solubility Isotherms for Polypropylene in Carbon Dioxide, Plots of CO<sub>2</sub> Pressures versus Weight Fractions Polypropylene at Constant Temperatures.

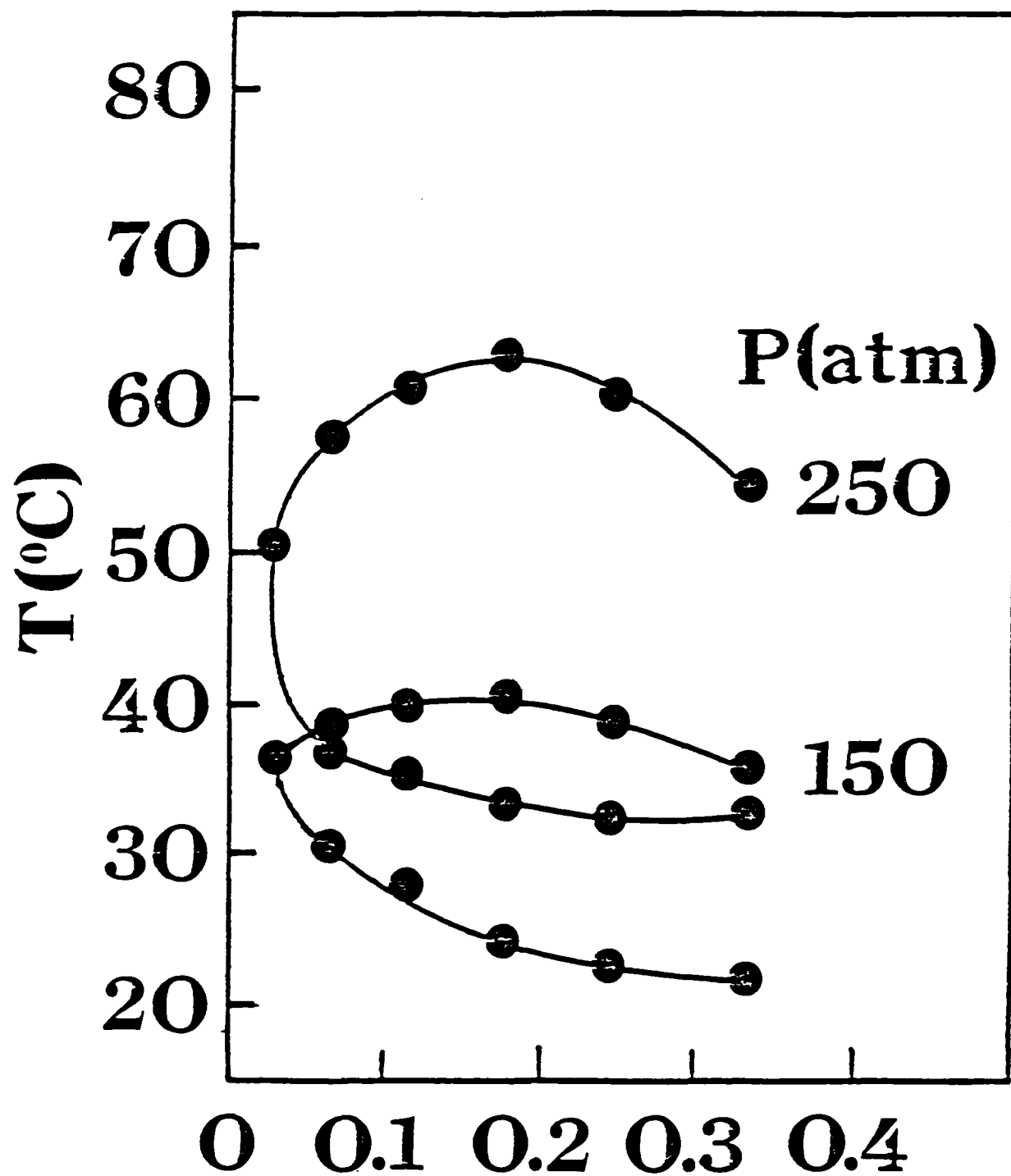


Figure 4 - Solubility Isobars for Polydimethylsiloxane in Carbon Dioxide, Plots of Temperatures versus Weight Fractions Polydimethylsiloxane at Constant Pressures ( $\text{CO}_2$ ).

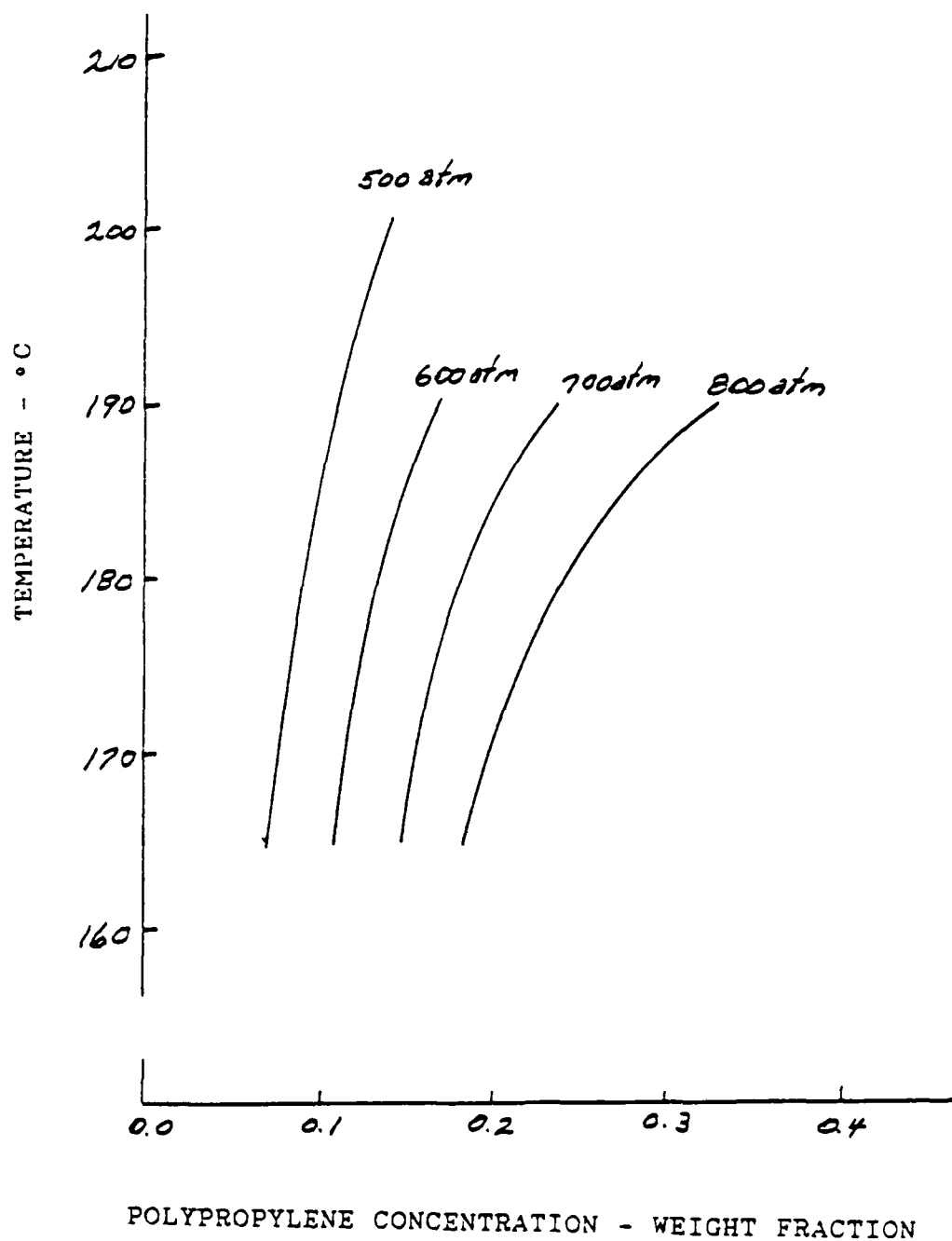


Figure 5 - Solubility Isobars for Polypropylene in Carbon Dioxide, Plots of Temperatures versus Weight Fractions Polypropylene at Constant Pressures ( $\text{CO}_2$ ).

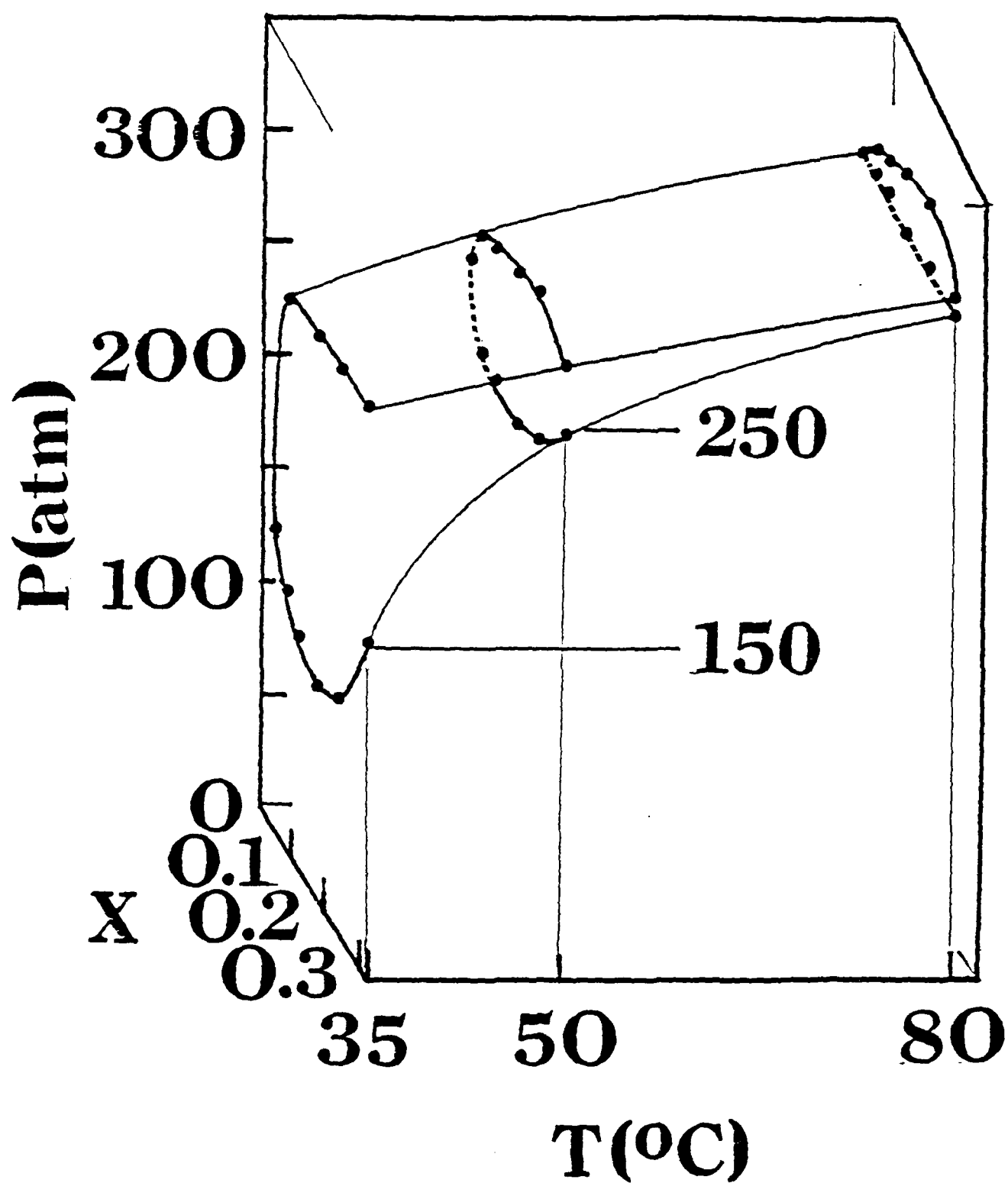


Figure 6 - Plot of Pressure - Temperature - Concentration ( $X$ ) Behavior of Solubility of Polydimethylsiloxane in Carbon Dioxide.

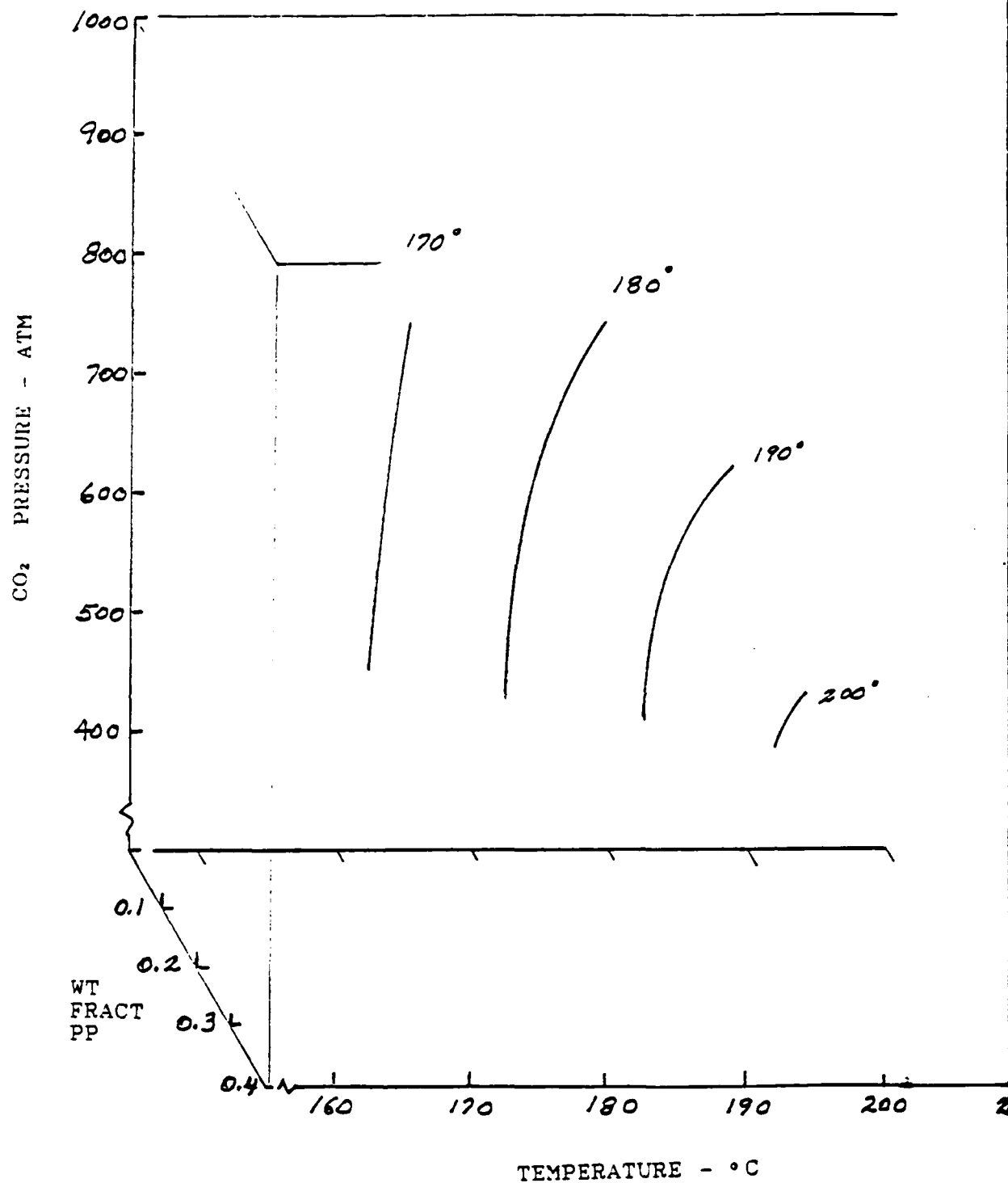


Figure 7 - Plot of Pressure - Temperature - Concentration (X) Behavior of Solubility of Polypropylene in Carbon Dioxide.



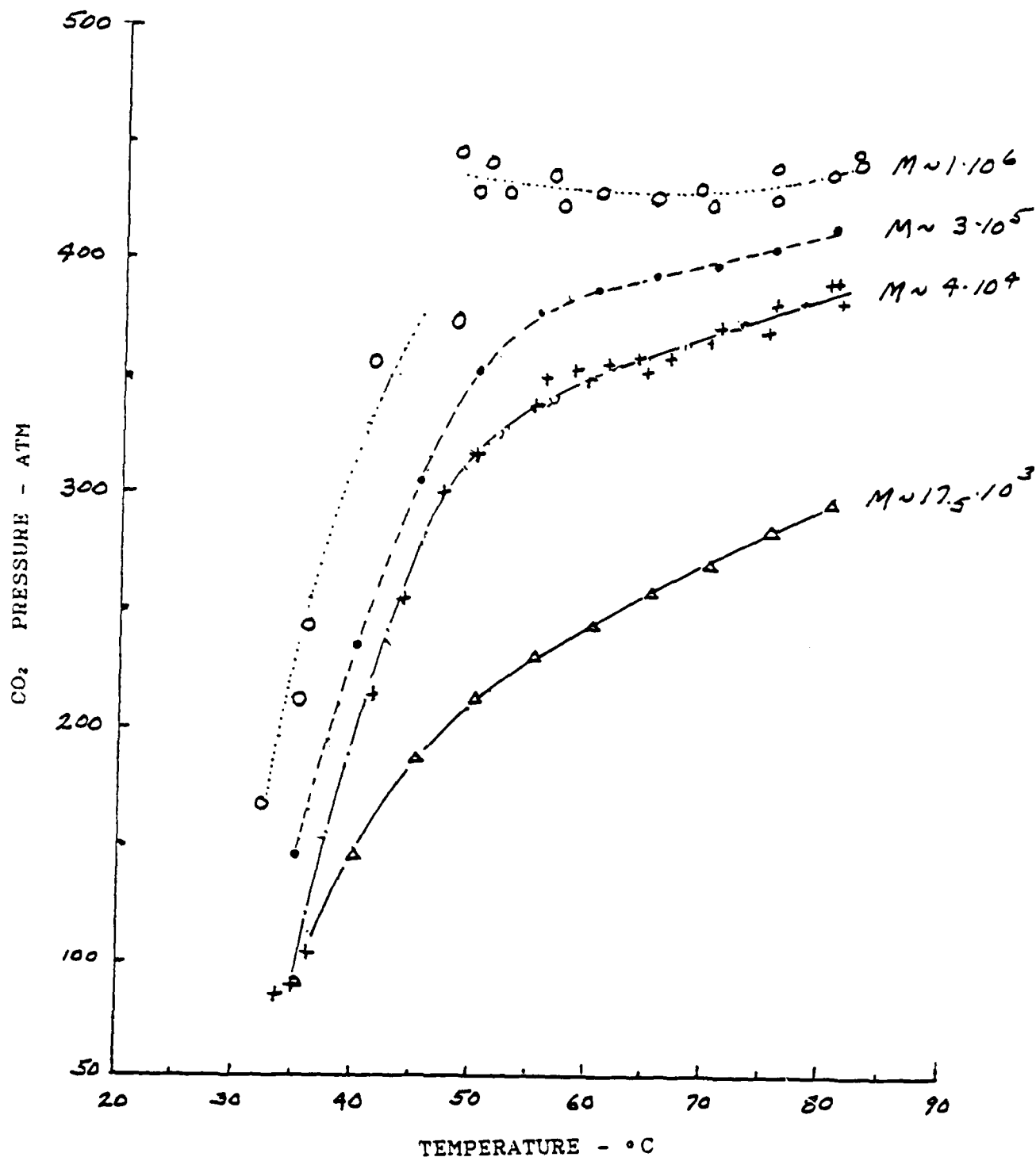


Figure 8 - Effects of Molecular Weight on Solubility of Polydimethylsiloxane in Carbon Dioxide, Plot of CO<sub>2</sub> Pressures versus Temperatures for Solutions of Polydimethylsiloxane of Various Molecular Weights at 0.18 Weight Fraction PDMS.

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